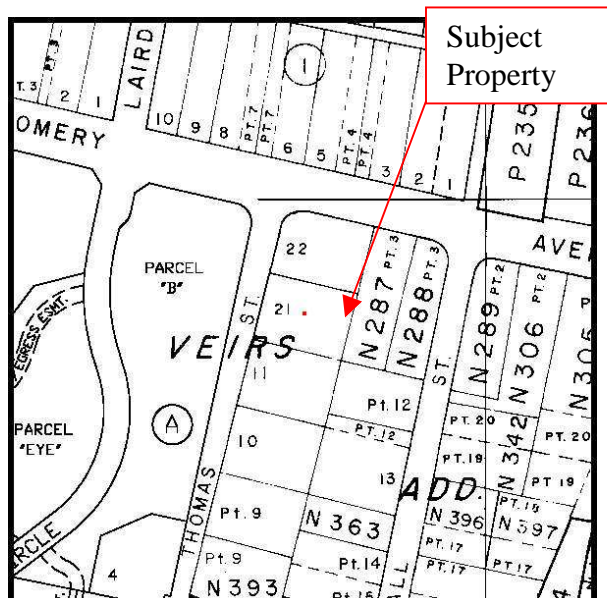


**CITY OF ROCKVILLE
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT
For
February 18, 2010 Meeting No. 02-2010**

APPLICATION: HDC2010-00494
ADDRESS: 8 Thomas Street
ACCEPTED: January 25, 2010
45-DAY LIMIT: March 19, 2010
OWNERS: Alex and Rebecca
Daskalakis
REQUEST: Rear Screened Porch
STAFF: Robin D. Ziek



REQUEST SUMMARY: The proposed project is for rear screened porch addition to a two-story single-family house. The total added living area is 256 sf.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of the rear screened porch with one Condition, and the Findings incorporated into the draft motion below.

DRAFT MOTION OF APPROVAL:

I recommend approval with the following Conditions and Findings:

Conditions: 1. The HardiPlank clapboard shall have a smooth “wood” finish.

Findings: Finding HDC2010-00494 application for a rear screened porch addition to be in keeping with the Technical Guide for New Additions and the Secretary of the Interior’s Standard #9, that the rear addition utilizes an existing door for access, thus preserving the existing structure; that the proposed design is in keeping with the design of the historic house and preserves the historic character of the site; that this is a modest addition to the existing structure sited at the rear for preservation of the character of the historic district, and that the new materials provide differentiation between the old and new construction; that the new construction could be removed in the future without damage to the integrity of the historic resource; I recommend approval with the following Conditions:



Front Elevation



Rear Elevation

Previous Requests:

HDC93-00037	House Addition
HDC2001-00195	Remove two Norway spruce
HDC2007-00400	Move hazardous Poplar
HDC2008-00420	Pave gravel driveway

Property Area: 14,674 sf
Structure Area: 2,806 sf
Zone: R-90 HD

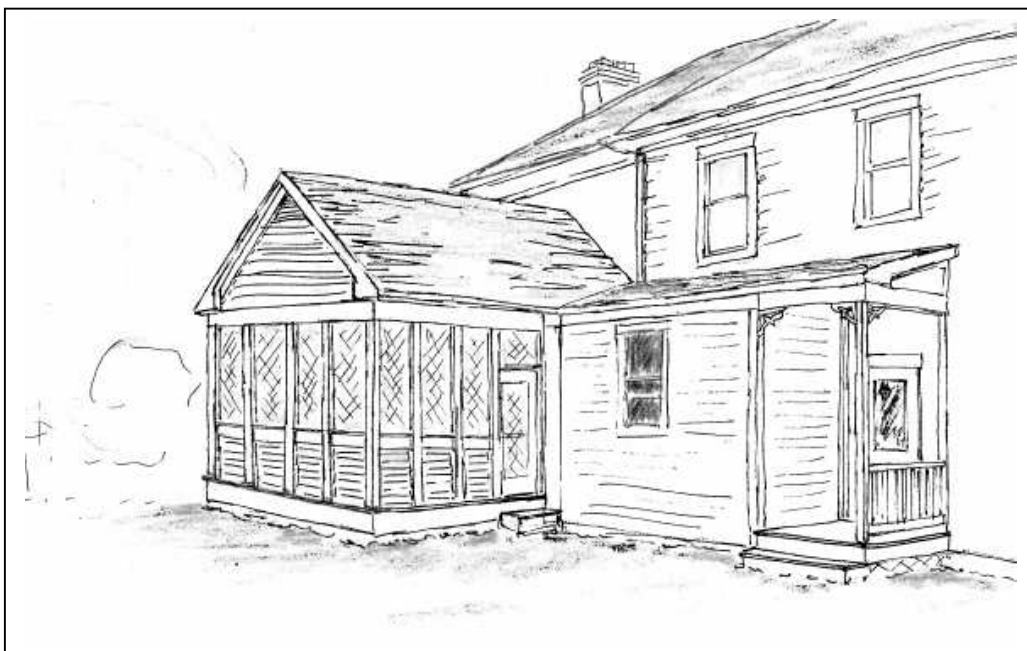
City of Rockville Permits Required: Building permit

BACKGROUND

Significance: The house at 8 Thomas Street is known as the Chinn House. It is a 1906 Transitional frame house with Four Square massing and Victorian elements such as elaborate porch trim. The house is named for the long-term owners, Raleigh and Rebecca Chinn (1926 – 1970). There is an early 20th century garage at the rear with a drafted concrete block foundation. It is included in the West Montgomery Avenue Historic District, and National Register Historic District. The house has German wood siding, and a pyramidal roof. The family room addition (south side) and a small rear addition (east side) date to 1993. There is a large poplar tree in the rear yard, between the house and the garage. The driveway was recently paved in asphalt; and, the house was recently painted and a county tax credit application has been submitted.

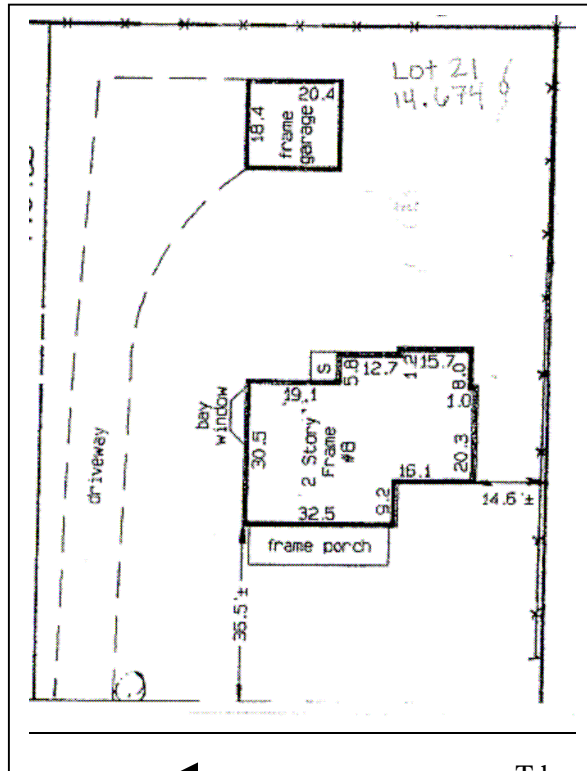
DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT and MATERIALS:

Drawings submitted by the applicant include a current site plan, a proposed site plan showing the size and location of the screened porch, scaled elevations of the proposed porch and a perspective drawing showing the rear elevation with the proposed rear addition, as viewed from their driveway. Typically, the HDC will receive full elevation drawings of a proposal, to facilitate review of the impacts of an addition on the entire structure. Staff has accepted the applicant's submittal because of the modest size, the rear location of the addition, and the fact that it is designed as an extension of an existing non-historic rear addition. All of this should significantly reduce any adverse impacts to the resource and to the overall Historic District.

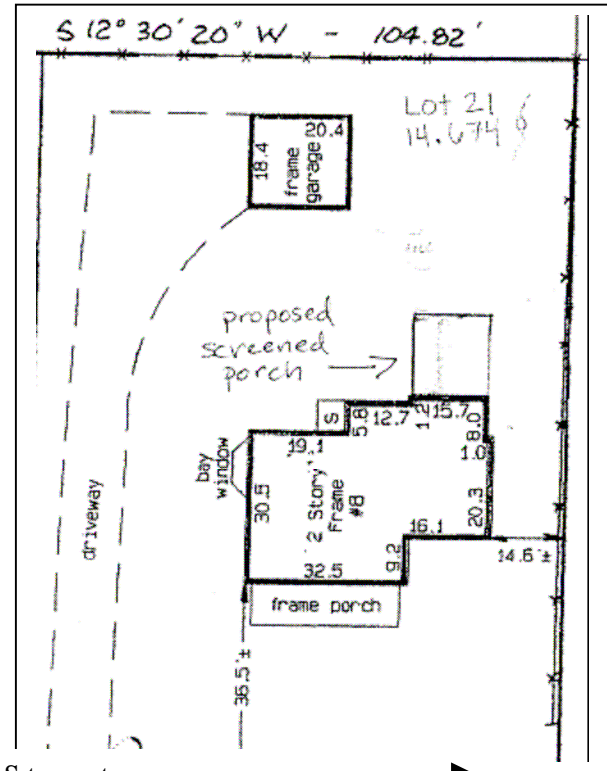


Siting: The new porch will sit in the rear yard, and is designed as an extension of the existing one-story addition off of the family room. This existing addition has served as a back hall, and links the family room to the main part of the house, while providing egress to the backyard.

Existing Site Plan



Proposed Site Plan

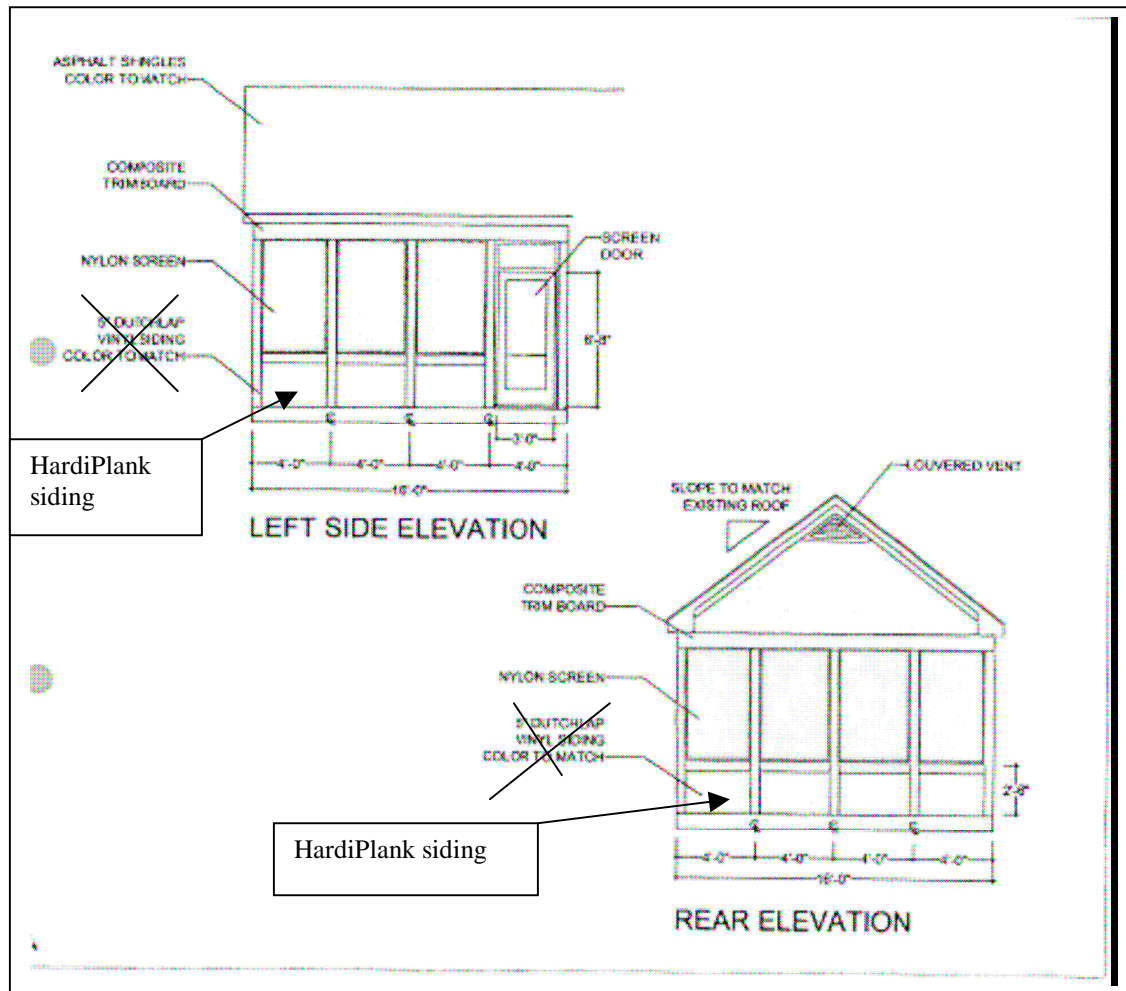


Design: The rear screened porch addition will measure 16' x 16' (256 sf) and be constructed at the rear of the house, at the southeast corner. The one-story porch will have a front gable roof that attaches to an existing roof below the existing eaves. The screened porch is designed as an extension of the existing 1993 rear addition. The lower 2'-6" of the porch "wall" will be enclosed, leaving the rest of the "wall" area with screening. A rear door from the screened porch provides egress on the north side, leading to the driveway.

Materials: The existing rear addition has metal shingles on it, matching the main roof of the house. The new porch roof is proposed to have asphalt shingles. The owner could not locate metal shingles that exactly matched the existing roof shingles, and decided to match the color of the existing roof. Composite wood material is proposed for all trim pieces. Vinyl siding was initially proposed for the lower 2-1/2 feet of "wall" and also for the gable end, but the owner has agreed to install HardiPlank fiber-cement board after discussions with staff and his contractor.

Foundation Construction: The porch will utilize post-and-beam construction to minimize root disturbance to the mature poplar in the back yard. In addition, this will allow aeration of the

surface roots in this vicinity and permit surface water to drain across the porch site to the extent that it can on this flat rear yard.



Staff Discussion

Guidance for the construction of additions to historic structures includes the following from the Rockville's Technical Guide #4: "A new addition should be designed to respect a building's character and to preserve its historic integrity. This generally means using existing rooflines, trim lines, material and massing as a guide for designing the new addition. It is critical that additions do not visually overpower the original building."

The porch is a modest rear addition, suitably sited to minimize impacts to the historic character of the West Montgomery Avenue Historic District. The placement of the proposed porch, as an extension of an existing small addition, further reduces any damage to the historic materials of the house.

Staff discussed concerns with the originally proposed materials with the applicant (2/11/10). Composite wood and vinyl siding are considered "substitute materials." These are discussed in

the City's Technical Guides #4 (Additions) and # 15 (Substitute Materials), as well as National Park Service Preservation Brief #14 (Additions). General guidance is that new materials that have the same character as a historic material may be suitable for an addition to a historic resource, and staff voiced concerns that vinyl siding does not meet this test.

The composite wood trim product can be selected that is installed like wood and painted. Selection of a smooth-finished trim piece that is painted to match the house will closely mimic the appearance of wood. Products such as MiraTec, Royal Wood, etc. provide suitable products for use on additions in a historic district.

Similarly, composite siding products, such as HardiPlank, have been approved on new additions by the HDC in the past because of the similarities to the appearance of wood siding. This is achieved with the dimension of the material, the relative rigidity of the material, and its installation method. This cement-fiber board is nailed into place and painted, and looks similar in appearance to wood clapboard if the smooth finish are selected. As the smooth finish replicates new wood, and the "wavy" finish replicates deteriorated wood, the smooth finish is preferred. Staff notes that the fiber-cement clapboard product does not replicate the German siding, but has the appearance of plain lapped siding. This also complies with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards #9 for new additions, where there should be some differentiation between the old and new work.

For this same reason, staff recommends the use of asphalt shingles on this new rear addition. The use of a new material on this new addition will serve to accentuate the difference between the old and new parts of the house. The shingles on the 1993 addition do not replicate the original metal shingles, and asphalt shingles at the rear will have little or no impact on the overall Historic District.



Comparison of 1890-era metal shingles and 20th c metal shingles at the property



Existing Rear elevation

COMPLIANCE WITH APPLICABLE STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

The Secretary of the Interior presents *Rehabilitation* as "the process of returning a property to a state of utility, through repair or alteration, which makes possible an efficient contemporary use while preserving those portions and features of the property which are significant to its historic, architectural, and cultural values."

The City of Rockville follows the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for Rehabilitation* in recognition of the fact that, for the most part, our historic resources are private homes for active families who provide a public service as good stewards of our historic resources and heritage.

Standard #9, states that: "New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment."

The proposed porch addition is consistent with this Standard. The rear addition is a small one-story room to be sited at the rear of the house on the side opposite from the driveway, thereby minimizing its visibility from the street.

The proposed porch is designed as an addition to an existing non-historic rear addition, thus minimizing any damages to historic materials on the house. The new addition respects the original floor plan, and uses an existing door for access.

This proposed addition also complies with the City's Technical Guide for New Additions (# 4), which states: "A new addition should be designed to respect a building's character and to preserve its historic integrity. This generally means using existing rooflines, trim lines, material and massing as a guide for designing the new addition. It is critical that additions do not visually overpower the original building."